Story of A Blunder

BY

K. VYASA RAO, B.A.

WITH FOREWORD

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DR. SIR S. SUBRAHMANYA AIYAR.

GANESH & CO., MADRAS.

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Author of "The Press under the Press Act"

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FOREWORD

FROM about the end of May to the middle of September 1917 South India particularly went through a strange and trying political experience. What suggested to the authorities the adoption of this "policy without a godfather" as Mr. Vyasa Row has so appropriately characterised it, and which led up to this experience on our part is still a mystery. It is equally a mystery where Indian affairs would have led to under this direction but for a dramatic and providential change at the helm brought about by the Mesopotamia debate. The policy which began and ended in this mysterious manner is illustrative of the prospects of Indian progress under bureaucratic patronage. Many instances may be recalled in which, if the judgment of the Executive in India had been reversed as promptly as in this instance, India's destiny would have run on different lines.

Be this as it may, it is worth observing that in politics the blunders of rulers are more full of lessons than a wise handling of public affairs. The chapter of bureaucratic maladroitness presented here and which is even more instructive to the bureaucrats themselves than to others is not an exception to this truth. It strikingly unfolds the successive stages of a melodrama

which cannot but be of interest even to the average British reader. For, it would make him familiar with the singular and amusing developments which his own countrymen are capable of in India as bureaucrats.

It need hardly be pointed out that, in these fast moving days, it is essential that the record of every Executive assumption followed by a constitutional triumph should be found in an easily available form. It has so happened that these contributions from the pen of Mr. Vyasa Row embody in a natural and historical sequence the various instructive phases of an egregious attempt and its failure. The Executive, in spite of its discomfiture in this matter, is still struggling hard to avert a collapse of its case with available resources as may be seen from the way the Deputations have been sought to be selected in Madras. This is but a drizzle after the downpour. Still, it is better there are obstacles revealing the character of parties and the moral strength of a cause than that we should have an opposition thwarting our attempts without any external indication.

The hundreds of readers who will enjoy this Story of a Blunder cannot but feel obliged to Messrs. Ganesh & Co. for issuing it so opportunely.

'BEACH HOUSE,' MYLAPORE, 15*th December* 1917. } S. SUBRAHMANIEM.

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY

1917.

"About February or March."	Government of India's Circular to Local Governments "in regard to Home Rule or Self-Government"—Contents not yet disclosed.
24th May. ...	Lord Pentland's Speech to the Legislative Council at Ootacamund.
16th June. ...	Orders of Internment served on Mrs. Besant and Messrs. Wadia and Arundale.
12th July. ...	Mr. Montagu's Speech on the Mesopotamia Report in the House of Commons.
18th " ...	Mr. Austen Chamberlain's resignation, consequent upon the Report and the Debate.
19th " ...	Appointment of Mr. Montagu as Secretary of State for India.
20th Aug. ...	Historic announcement in Parliament by Mr. Montagu *in re* Responsible Government to India and of his visit to this country.
5th Sept. ...	Intimation in the Imperial Legislative Council of the cancellation of orders of internment.
17th " ...	Release of the interned.

Publishers' Note

Growth of public opinion requires that such events as have taken place recently should find presentation in an available form as possessing a present and future value. The thanks of the publishers are due to Mr. K. Vyasa Rao for enabling them to bring out what has been so very appreciatively spoken of and found interesting by a large section of the public. A few minor omissions and verbal changes have been made as suitable alterations by the author.

The Publishers are deeply grateful to Dr. Sir S. Subrahmanya Aiyar for the Foreword which he has written in the midst of his engrossing work.

STORY OF A BLUNDER

I.—Bolt from the Blue Hills

[On 6th April Lord Pentland closed the Budget session of the Madras Legislative Council at Madras. During the whole of this session he made no reference to Indian political demands or to the creation of an unhealthy or undesirable political atmosphere in the Madras Presidency. On 24th May however in closing a Legislative session at Ootacamund he bitterly inveighed against Indian political demands and complained against "a campaign of constant detraction," "a reckless campaign of calumny," urged "that all thoughts of the early grant of responsible Self-Government should be entirely put out of mind" and finally ended by "calling upon all who hear me, or read these words for their support in any action which the Government may be forced to take to discourage these unwise and dangerous methods and the extravagant aims, which they are designed to further." Between 6th April and 22nd May no event had taken place in Madras except the 28th session of the Provincial Conference at which Mr. V. P. Madhava Row, C.I.E., presided and urged that the bureaucratic form of government should give place to responsible government. Lord Pentland however did not refer to this presidential speech, but preferred a general condemnation of the demand for responsible government and announced his intention to resort to repressive measures—to regulate the political progress of the country by executive action.]

IF anything could aggravate the holding of a legislative session at Ootacamund, the foreshadowing of a repressive programme at such a session, on grounds that will not bear examination even by an average school-boy, cannot but do it.

But a month and fifteen days back, His Excellency was in possession of all the materials that have now gone to convince him of the need for repressive action and he was face to face with his Legislative Council when from the capital of the presidency he could have made the same announcement as he has made now. But he did not do so; and what has happened since then to force his hands to commit himself to a statement so bewilderingly wide of the mark? The only public function of any importance, of provincial magnitude, was the meeting of the 28th Session of the Provincial Conference at Cuddalore at which an ex-Dewan of three Indian States and a Companion of the Indian Empire presided and pleaded for the transfer of the powers of Government from all autocratic officialdom to a responsible executive. Even he deprecated the use of the term Home Rule and pointed out that it was no longer a question of the good points of the bureaucracy to which he could bear personal testimony, but of the inevitable need for a radical change in the system of Indian Government. The issue of the G. O. regarding students and politics which was enforced at the Conference itself led to no contretemps of any kind. As usual the delegates spoke to the respective resolutions and departed to their respective places as they have done for a generation now. Assuredly, nothing that could have taken place at Cuddalore could have suggested the need for drastic steps such as His Excellency thought fit to ask the support of the Council for. Has there

been anything else in this presidency or even outside this presidency ?—anything else that might not have called for action about the beginning of April ? What then is the justification for Lord Pentland to have spoken not a word about the need for repressive action in April but to make such a fearful prognostication about the end of May ? The subject of Self-Government for India was not on the agenda of that session of the Council. No non-official member had referred to it ; and yet Lord Pentland was inclined to be candid at the closing quarter of an hour of the session which gave no chance of a reply from any of his councillors. This was neither courteous of him nor calculated to improve his relations with them. It was something like a man waiting for the train to start to have his unpleasant say to those who had come to see him off. It was a process of rating the whole country and turning his back in the expectation that the country and he would get on the better for it. It was a mistake, even were His Excellency's observations justifiable, for him to have put them off to a session of the Council that was to meet about 250 miles away from the capital city and nearly 7000 feet above sea level. Not that he should have measured the level of the place at which he makes a speech, but it is deplorable that he should have made from a summer retreat a declaration of policy on a subject of supreme importance at a time of political and economic travail like the present. It was a worse mistake for him to have made those observations giving no opportunity for

the representatives of the people whose support he sought for to open their minds in their turn to the head of the Government. It was the worst mistake for him to have made those observations without a word of explanation as to the exact circumstances that called forth the plan of campaign that he chose to outline to the evident stupefaction of those who were present.

Notwithstanding all these considerations, we have got before us a speech by the head of the Government that makes one wonder what is to come next and what it is intended to herald forth. Dealing with it as a responsible utterance made to the constituted representatives of the people one cannot but raise the question if His Excellency was within his province in dealing with an issue which involves the continuance of the powers which are by statutory enactments vested in him as Governor-in-Council. He is directly a party, just as in a question between a landlord and his tenant, the landlord is no more than a dominant party. If rightly or wrongly the Indian demand is that the present form of government in India should be replaced by a popular form, those in whom that Government is vested at present are clearly outside the tribunal that is to pronounce the award. It is open to them to argue their case against the party making the demand, but it is certainly not even decent for them to assume the role of disinterested councillors and impartial judges, and more to promise to exercise the powers of guardianship to the extent of applying the legal birch. By all means if

there should be a breach of the peace or the commission of any criminal act, the Government, not as a political party, but as a body responsible for peace and order, are bound to take action. But it is to argue like a political party, and then in connection with purely political issues to set in motion the machinery of Government intended for the preservation of peace and order. Even when a political crime takes place the Government act not as a political party, but as custodians of public safety. In countries governed like India especially, the distiuction between a Government that acts as the supreme sovereign authority and as a subordinate entity exercising powers of trust delegated to it is unmistakable. It is open to the Government of His Majesty at Home, to the sovereign people of England, to penalise any agitation for Self-government under the Crown in India. Right or wrong, politic or impolitic, such a step is not constitutionally inconsistent with India as a dependency. But for a provincial satrap in India, to step into the arena of controversy and brandish his stock of weapons to thwart an agitation having for its object the modification of the powers vested in him is too chimerical for an age when old empires are melting before our eyes to make new federations, when even in India princes vie with publicists in confessing that unless a great national autonomy is developed soon, our national safety stands to be imperilled at any moment. Self-government for India has ceased to be a matter of internal need only. It has become more immi-

nent from the need for India to become a live factor within the Empire and within the larger orbit which includes the Empire as a constituent. At such a time to adumbrate a scheme of repression, to ostracize the demand of Self-government for India, is to become in reality apprehensive of the larger vision of the higher statesmanship of Great Britain and the Empire. For, while nothing has happened in recent months in Madras to threaten a breach of the orderly relations between Government and the people, a good deal has happened outside India to hasten our prospects. Even a hereditary Maharajah has unburdened his heart throwing off the inherited reserve of his order and asked the representatives of the Empire whether Indian aspirations are insoluble? Even an unyielding Colonial Minister like Sir Robert Borden has admitted that reciprocity can be the only rule of conduct between India and the Colonies. Even so staunch a believer in preferential treatment by race and color as General Smuts has struck in for a constitution of the British Empire as an irresistible partnership of self-governing nations. If he did not mean to include India in such a description, he need not have made it at all, seeing that the British Empire excluding India and the Crown and plantation colonies form a monarchical commonwealth of free nations. The strength and vigour of that declaration and the very timbre of his voice in making it shewed clearly that India was to be set free to make the utmost of her God-given opportunities, liberated from the shackles of a

benevolent but zealous despotism. Mr. Asquith, had at the very beginning of the war, when Indian loyalty came upon the world as a stunning revelation, spoke of lifting this country from a dependent to a partner. Since then India has travelled fast and come to be a question of practical politics in addition to being a favourite subject of appreciation and regard. At such a time, when there is nothing to compromise law and order, Lord Pentland has taken upon himself to proclaim that "all thoughts of the early grant of responsible self-government should be put entirely out of mind." Who has commissioned the Governor of Madras, of all authorities in India, to make so confident an assertion as to the intentions of the people of the United Kingdom and of the other parts of the British Empire? By all means let any attempt to violate law and order meet with condign punishment; but that does not mean that it lies in the power of Lord Pentland to ask us to put out of thought the early grant of responsible Self-government for this country. He has chosen to speak in the strain of a modern Canute, but unlike that great wise man, in genuine ignorance of what may lie within his reach. To fortify himself in this amusing attitude he speaks of "a reckless campaign of calumny directed against the Madras Government." If there be any such campaign, by all means let the law take its course. But there are political bodies of established repute like the Congress and the Moslem League, and there are men as loyal as Lord Pentland outside India in the British Empire, of his own race

and blood, who cannot contemplate an India after the War without a substantial change in her political status. In so far as Lord Pentland lends himself to mixing up a tendency to lawlessness which exists nowhere in this Presidency with an attempt to bring about such a change he will be making an egregious blunder and helping in the formation of a class of critics less considerate to our national shortcomings. By interfering with the constitutional rights of the subject in British India, at such a time as this, when England is steadying itself from might without right, he will be raising forces of disapproval that will be by no means a testimony to British statesmanship in India. Let him deal with political wrong-doers as they arise and demand attention ; but let him stand aloof from loyal and constitutional attempts to effect a change in the character of the Government in India. These attempts and the various schemes put forward for the political advancement of the country have nothing to do with the business on his hand. He is here to administer the province and not to issue injunctions as to our political aspirations. Let him not trifle with the spirit of national self-respect, at a time when for the upholding of that spirit in regard to a foreign charge like Belgium the blood of the East has mingled with the waters of the Somme, the Nile and the Tigris. In this matter our petition will be laid on the steps of the British Throne and committed to the conscience of the Nations of the British Empire, in the presence of the great Democracies of the Old and the New World. If the small vested

interests of the bureaucracy should be more to it than the inauguration of a new epoch under the ægis of an awakened Great Britain and Greater Britain, let it demur to the change; but let no attempt be made to create an unseemly political squabble with all the unedifying consequences that it must lead to if persisted in.—(*Hindu*, 31st Aug.)

II.—"Public Safety" and Political Faith

[Conformably to the policy foreshadowed in his speech at Ootacamund by Lord Pentland, executive action was taken and orders of internment were served on Mrs. Besant and Messrs. Wadia and Arundale on 16th June.]

The Issue before the Country

NO irony can be more bitter and no political prospect more exasperating than that an Act passed for securing public safety should in the hands of the bureaucracy come to be utilised for endangering the safety of the individual. It is sufficiently bad that any subject of the Crown should be liable to be dealt with directly by the executive in regard to his personal freedom without the safeguards of a legal trial; but it is worse that he should be so liable under the provisions of an Act intended for the greater security of person and property at a time of war and hence arming the executive with unlimited powers. It is this callous misuse of a legislative measure by the executive that has undermined the trust of the people

more than the deprivation of personal freedom itself; and not until this policy of misapplying and abusing the powers under the Defence of India Act is definitely abandoned by the Government can public trust be restored. That is the stand on which all Indian politicians as politicians pure and simple must rest their position and demand a retraction of the present policy. Home Rule is a political tenet by itself whose legality has been at no time questioned; the methods pursued by its leaders and followers are subject to legal tests and not one of them desires to escape the proper application of all or any of these tests. It is open to every one to entertain whatever differences he may choose as regards the goal or the methods. But, we are all of us bound to see that the application of the Defence of India Act is confined only to purposes for which that Act has been passed. This is the duty that rests upon all those, who, whatever their shade of political opinion, whatever their political caste and creed, mean to count in the affairs of the country as citizens. Those who stand aloof from such an attempt by constitutional methods, have no business to pose themselves as political leaders, either as Home Rulers or Anti-Home Rulers. The cleavage at the present moment if honesty is to be a factor in Indian politics, is here and here alone. The Zemindars who have rushed to announce their non-complicity with Home Rule, the non-Brahmin politicians who belabour the Brahmin community and the Home Rule leaders, even the Anglo-Indian merchants, lawyers and business-men who think it worth

while to be in India, all of them must see to it that this executive demoralisation comes to an end. If there is a general political conscience in India, apart from the grievances of particular communities and apart from the reservations that each class may have in regard to Indian political problems in their entirety, it ought to assert itself in such an attempt. Public conferences and meetings to be held in regard to the situation that faces us at the present moment need not concern themselves with any rider as to the Post-war Reform scheme—that is a matter capable of exciting honest differences of opinion and must be left to be pursued by each political party as it may appeal to itself. But all parties ought to agree that the Defence of India Act is not to be used in regard to any person as to whose allegiance to the British Crown as a British subject there is not the shadow of an adverse suggestion. Unless the Government are prepared to affirm that a person is interested in the overthrow of British sovereignty of India or that his action is calculated to help it, whatever other Act they may employ, they ought not to think of the Defence of India Act. Firstly because it demoralises the national feeling against British connection itself, forcing people to think of themselves as enemies of the British Crown, and secondly because the powers under the Act are so wide that the executive may do anything and everything under it—so that used against loyal subjects of the Crown, it becomes a most tyrannical abuse of power. What would those Zemindars who

are now announcing to the world that they are against the Home Rule propaganda—what would they think if under the Defence of India Act the benefit of the permanent settlement is indefinitely revoked and their "peishcush" enhanced? This may be an extreme example, but it is clear that if the Act has not been meant as a short cut for such a purpose, it is not equally a short cut to silence all those with whom the Bureaucracy may not agree.

Waning Faith.

Sir James Meston, in opening the first meeting of the U. P. Council on his return from England as an Indian delegate to the Imperial Conference, confessed that the country was being overtaken with a sense of distrust such as he had never before experienced. "There is," he admitted, "a note of suspicion and mistrust such as I have never heard before during my service in the country." He put it more explicitly in the next sentence and said "there seems to be a fear that the Government of this country is in some way preparing a policy of reaction." To exchange our ideas freely with Sir James Meston, whether the Government is actually preparing such a policy of reaction or not, there is no denying that there is such a feeling. Nor can it be overlooked that there are grounds for such a feeling. The War broke out in August 1914; Lord Hardinge left India in April, 1916. So long as Lord Hardinge was here there was nothing but a wave of enthusiasm and confidence in the intentions of the Government. The Congress

session of 1914 shewed the feeling when Lord Pentland graced the occasion and for a moment he and Mrs. Besant stood on the platform their hands held in greeting. The Congress of 1915 merited the approbation of the Anglo-Indian Press—it was as though the Government had lent one of their own body to preside over the session. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had died some weeks previously and yet the Congress went on as though he was there to direct its deliberations. It showed the solidarity of feeling between the Government and the delegates in almost all essential matters. In April Lord Hardinge left these shores—at a most inopportune hour for India—evidently on account of the Mesopotamia Inquiry. From June 1916 India was no longer what it was under Lord Hardinge. The action against Mr. Tilak in Bombay, against Mrs. Besant in Madras, the discovery of the Round Table group trying to shape the political future of India studiously avoiding publicity and angrily resenting it later, the publication of that obsolete Report without a word of indication that the Government of India considered it so, the attempt made to take away the right of civil action against the Secretary of State in consolidating existing statutes, the perpetuation of existing disabilities against Indians even in creating a temporary Defence Force, the abolition of the system of volunteering just at the time it should have been thrown open on old conditions to Indians of all ranks and classes subject to proper tests, all these successively shewed that Lord Hardinge's policy no longer held good in India. Each of them was a

reactionary step in itself, and the cumulative effect was to evidence the setting in of a reactionary regime —notwithstanding all the inspiring sentiments that emanated from higher authorities at Home. Add to this feeling created by successive events, the fact that the Government of India had sent a Despatch about post-War reforms without any announcement in India, and add to it again the reception given to the Nineteen Memorandum by the Anglo-Indian Press and by officials themselves. Would it not have been strange if a feeling of distrust had not resulted from all these circumstances one after another, firstly in the sphere of general policy of the Government and secondly and specifically in regard to the post-War policy. But still, when the Congress met in December last at Lucknow there was nothing to distinguish that session except that it made up for lack of its own activity for eleven months in the year by authorising political bodies of its own persuasion to popularise the Reform scheme, in consequence of the fear that, as the Government of India was inclined to be, Indian politicians could not take the risk of inaction.

The Latest Phase.

If things had been left even at this stage, matters would have been more or less in a normal condition—but the policy of utilising the provisions of the Defence of India Act to control political agitation, after a pointedly 'political' speech by the head of a Government and the further use of its provisions for putting down the agitation to which this

action has given rise—this last phase has converted distrust into despair. Was Lord Pentland's a political or a military speech—was it the speech of a politician, whatever might be its complexion, or was it the warning of a Dictator ruling a rebel people under a Military Law? It was a political speech through and through—delivered at a time of profound peace in India, at a time when the War Loan was the foremost topic to engross public attention, when public meetings were being convened for presuading young men to join the Defence Force;—and it was criticised as a political speech—as openly as the speech was made. But the action that followed it was under the Defence of India Act! The two cannot but stand connected together, and the conclusion cannot but be drawn that the bureaucracy in its reactionary progress has come after all to clutch at a War measure enacted for the enemies of the Crown to strike an effective blow at Indian constitutional agitation!

To those of the public who knew the assurances given by Sir Reginald Craddock when the Defence of India Act was introduced by him, the situation created by the present application of the Act is a sad lesson indeed. Apart from the "powers primarily required in the military interests of the country" and "for the protection of property of military value and for the prevention of injury to such property or to the interests of the Army as generally are required when the country is at war"—apart from powers required for these purposes,

he mentioned three other factors which required the provisions embodied in the Defence of India Act. These were firstly the revolutionary party on the Pacific Coast of America, which he "conveniently described" as the Ghadr party, and which in his words "saw in the great European war their best opportunity for attempting to translate their doctrines into action;" secondly, what he described as being "closely akin to this movement, the anarchist movement in Bengal" and whose "ultimate aims are the same;" and thirdly the "lawlessness in Western Punjab, partly induced by economic unrest." He wound up after enumerating these causes:—"These, my Lord, are the causes which have led the Government to introduce this legislation." But, does Mrs. Besant's agitation or Mr. Arundale's complicity or Mr. Wadia's activity, does any of these things come under the category of the revolutionary conspiracy on the Pacific Coast, or under the anarchist movement in Bengal or under the lawlessness in Western Punjab, "wrecking shops and houses of Banias and burning their books"? Did Mr. Karandikhar's sojourn in South India contribute to any of these three inimical activities? Are the warnings that are week after week rumoured to be given to a journal here and a publisher there under the Defence Act—are these also given because the gentlemen receiving them have been in participation with any of the three factors mentioned by the Home Member? The latest phase of bureaucratic reaction shews the extent to which the Bureaucracy

is prepared to go in the maintenance of what has seemed to Indians a "policy" of the present Government of India—a policy under which the people feel compelled to believe that there is safety only in silence. Under such circumstances despair must give place to a policy of constitutional resistance if the country has not become dead to political sensibility. How can Sir James Meston wonder that he has to witness currents of thought and feeling that he has never before witnessed?

When we have come to such a pass as this, before there can be any attempt at exchange of views on the reforms to follow the conclusion of the War—there must be a restoration of good faith by the Defence of India Act being withdrawn from such applications. We may allow the past to be an instance of sudden distemper in the body politic of the country and enter into a free exchange of views—provided only this danger to public safety undermining political faith is arrested in time before the exchange of views begins. If Government will not consent to this, all our efforts must be concentrated in keeping ourselves at least free as a constitutional political party. A new movement, apart from Home Rule, or Post-War Reform ought to be begun the aim of which should be to force the Government to abandon the present attitude.—(*Hindu*, 16th Aug.)

III.—" Within Their Powers "

[When questions were asked in the House of Commons by Commander Wedgewood and Mr. Philip Snowden, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, replied that although the internments were not sanctioned by him at the outset, he approved of the action of the Madras Government as it was " within their powers."]

IN the course of the reply Mr. Chamberlain had to give to questions in the House of Commons, justifying the Madras Government's recent orders, he had to fall back more than once on the plea that they had acted within their powers. Of course, Mr. Chamberlain agreed with them when the Local Government responsible for peace and order acted within their powers. We suppose this phrase, acting within powers, has a particularly soothing effect on the Englishman's mind. When the Government have *not* gone *beyond* the limits open to them, the whole matter is treated as one of discretion ; and the discretion of the man on the spot is allowed to prevail over the discretion of another who is thousands of miles away from the place. The doctrine of the man on the spot acting unerringly is no longer of such sanctity as it was before and during the time of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. Those were the days when the man on the spot theory had unquestioned acceptance. The troubles that followed the close of that Viceroyalty convinced the British political public that that theory had severe limitations and it would be disastrous to systematically ignore those limitations.

Since then, the Mesopotamian failure has been a more powerful means of bringing to light the danger of going to sleep, trusting the man on the spot. The fact is the man on the spot will do well only when the man to whom he is answerable exercises at any rate ordinary care and caution. If this latter makes the theory a convenient pillow on which he might rest his head and renounce his responsibilities, he would have to wake up with a start and regret that he had put the theory to wrong use. So far, British political opinion is now trying to shake itself free from the doctrine of the man on the spot. But this phrase "Within their powers" has not yet lost its hold on the English mind and capable advisers of the Secretary of State know that it has still its value as an hypnotic pass. It is necessary, therefore, that members of the House of Commons at any rate must know what value they should attach to it in reality.

If we should begin with the alphabet of Indian politics, we have to make members of Parliament understand that in everything the Government may do in India, they will be within their powers. They might deport a British subject without assigning reason and without bringing him to trial and detain him under duress vile, and they will be within their powers. They might prohibit public meetings convened for constitutional purposes by the flower of the educated section of ths community or permit a meeting to be held but prevent its proceedings being published in the local press and they act

within their powers. They might keep the public in an oppressed state of tension on account of their arbitrary orders and leave public men carrying on constitutional, political and public work in one sphere or another in a state of perpetual nerve as to what might happen to their personal safety and freedom the next moment. They have the power to act so. They might, without the least justification, ask a person about to start a press or a journal to furnish a security and they act within their powers. They might come down with a heavier call of security from any press or paper in existence for more than seven years now and not even the Secretary of State can say any more than that they have acted within their powers. They may "proclaim" a Province to-morrow and prohibit all meetings of more than 20 persons wherever held and for whatever purpose without a license from the Police and they will be quite within their powers. The other day at Tuticorin a Sub-Inspector of Police ordered a peaceful meeting to disperse, although Madras is not a proclaimed area and no permission of the Police is necessary—and the presumption of the authorities is that he acted within his powers. For, we have not yet heard that that official has been cashiered for what he did. More wonderful than this, the Magistrate in India sanctions a prosecution and his subordinate depending upon him for his prospects and promotion tries the man whose prosecution is so sanctioned and they all act within their powers. In normal times, in abnormal times, the Governments in India act within their

powers—and they do not lack powers to act much as they please; but if they suspect that they do, the deficiency is made up in no time and a "Law" or an "Act" is passed enabling them to act as they want to. The Indian Press Act of 1910 and the Conspiracy Act of 1913 are instances. If we turn to administrative and executive matters, they are always within their powers. For instance, which law, which statute, has authorised the Government of Behar, the baby province, to spend seven months in the year at Ranchi? The fact is Ranchi corresponds to Ooty, Darjeeling, Mahableshwar, Naini-Tal and Simla. In creating special openings for the members of the Civil Service at a time of War like this, in giving them pecuniary compensation for lack of promotion when we hear of sacrifice on all sides, in finding house accommodation for those who can take care of themselves both among Indians and Europeans, leaving the poorer classes without a concern, in having no more than one College of Medicine and one College of Engineering for a population of 43 millions—in all these they act within their powers. In what they do, in what they do not do, in what they may take it into their heads to do, they act within their powers. If so, what are these "unlimited" powers worth? and what is the good of alleging as a justification that the Government have acted within their powers as though they derive their powers from the people or are answerable to them in exercising them?

On the other hand, a Secretary who knows the

A. B. C. of Indian Administration ought to set aside as worthless the allegation that the Government have acted within their powers. The whole question is have they acted in the spirit of the British Constitution—as whose agents they administer India? If not, and if they have only acted within their powers, their action may not at all be conformable to those principles sacred to the cause of human liberty which is the only justification for Great Britain to be in possession of India, but may be in consonance only with those very negations of individual liberty which have made German efficiency what it is to day—a danger to the human race! The question for Parliamentary officials and critics is to examine and see how far the action of the authorities in India is such as can be in full conformity to the declared principles of civic and political freedom for establishing which the Democracies of the world are now warring with the German "efficiency" born of a political despotism. Mr. Chamberlain said no doubt that he "had no desire to suppress any movement for freedom." Good so far as it goes. Bnt has he found out what it is that he has suppressed after all? Freedom is suppressed when a person owing allegiance to the Crown is not brought to trial, but kept in custody—in a state of suspended animation—is deprived of the use of her or his God-given powers—condemned to be a mere physiological organism—discharging the primary functions of keeping the body and soul together. In doing this the Government in India may well believe that they have acted within their powers, but

they act totally outside the spirit of the British Constitution and in clear defiance of British principles of political fairplay. Mr. Chamberlain, with his discretion, practically clouded by the "powers" of the Government, has failed to see that he has been a party to suppressing freedom even as he was avowing that he had no such desire! What can be a more pathetic tragedy than this in illustrating the gulf that divides "constitutional principles" from "constitutional practice" which must necessarily suggest the adoption of desperate remedies before the gulf is bridged. Were India a self-governing country like Canada, it would be an adequate answer for the Secretary of State to say that the Government have acted within their powers. But now as India is, that answer is absolutely devoid of all significance and in reality only means "they do what they do; I say ditto to what they do."—(*New India*, 17th Aug.)

IV.—Signs of a Change

[After this luminous enunciation of policy, of the Government of Madras having acted "within their powers," in the ordering of Providence the Mesopotamia Debate came. It strangely enough left Lord Hardinge at his post, although he thrice offered to resign, but unexpectedly furnished an occasion for Mr. Chamberlain being relieved of his charge of India—and an indication of a change of policy was revealed by the appointment of Mr. Montagu in Mr. Chamberlain's place.]

ALTHOUGH a Parliamentary bye-product of the Mesopotamia Inquiry, the resignation of Mr. Austen Chamberlain is the most timely resignation we have had for a long time past. It may almost be said that the only redeeming feature of the waste of reputations that the Mesopotamia report seems to have involved is the change in the office of the Secretary of State for India. But for this, the debates in both Houses would have been all in all an ill wind that blew no good. Without disputing the share Mesopotamia has had in the resignation of Mr. Chamberlain, it seems by no means unlikely that the present situation in India has also had an essential part in bringing about the change. The number of cables that have gone to the Premier must have made Mr. Lloyd George scratch his head for a moment and look in the direction of the India Office. He must have made up his mind that this was no time for imperial maladroitness, and must have realised the need for a change at the helm. I take it so because if it was open to Mr. Balfour to "thrice"

refuse Lord Hardinge's resignation, it should have been equally open to Mr. Lloyd George to put aside Mr. Chamberlain's tender. It may be technically true that it is not open to the Premier to refuse a resignation tendered by a colleague and even if it should be open to him, no man can be held down to an office. But, between being prepared to relinquish it and being permitted to do so, there is too noticeable a gulf to be ignored and this circumstance came for prominent criticism in the House of Commons. Again, as between the late Viceroy and the late Secretary of State, the storm has been particularly rough round the Viceroy's head, and Mr. Chamberlain was left to navigate a comparatively calm ocean and was even in a position to go to the support of the ex-Viceroy. Public feeling did not anticipate that when Lord Hardinge's resignation was not wanted, Mr. Chamberlain's would be considered necessary. It may perhaps be urged that Lord Hardinge is indispensable in the Foreign Office and therefore Mr. Balfour could not think of disturbing the existing arrangements. That means by avowed implication that Mr. Chamberlain in the India Office filled a different role and that in the present condition of Indian politics the balance of advantage was perhaps the other way about. The effect is that the Premier readily responded to the psychological opportunity and accepted a resignation which Mr. Chamberlain was bound to tender according to accepted traditions. The Anglo-Indian Press was inclined to hold that in the present situation in India Mr. Chamberlain ought to have been

asked to continue in office; if so, the inference is clear that the Premier was altogether of a different mind—which means again that although the Mesopotamia report was the cause of the tender of the resignation the situation in India was the prime motive in its acceptance by the Prime Minister.

If any additional warrant should be considered necessary in support of this construction, the appointment of Mr. Montagu furnishes it in abundance. If Mr. Chamberlain's policy had been approved by Mr. Lloyd George, he would not have appointed as his successor the very man who said in the course of the very Mesopotamia debate that the Government in India should become more responsible to the people. The juxta-position is exceedingly interesting indeed; for, Mr. Chamberlain retorted there was no connection between Mesopotamia and Indian reforms. The connection is obvious and would have been obvious had not Mr. Chamberlain been accustomed to wear a monocle from the time of his political nativity. Mesopotamian failure is dead and gone, it has been splendidly retrieved; but there seems something like a failure looming in the distance in India. Mr. Montagu virtually directed the attention of Mr. Chamberlain to the clouds that are gathering from the clouds that have become an unpleasant memory. Furthermore, if the people of India had possessed greater responsibility at the time of the Mesopotamia failure, if the Government of India had been liable to get its credit voted by the representatives of the people, there would have been greater vigilance on

the part of the Government of India in the ordering of the expedition. Under the present Constitution of India, the Government has not got even the advantage of a vigilant opposition to which it would have to own some responsibility. The India Office, jammed between the Cabinet and the War Office in England, the one chalking out the line of political policy and the other having the last word about military requirements, the two at times getting inextricable, the Indian Government owning no responsibility to the representatives of the people, mistakes like the Mesopotomia blunder could not but occur. This was evidently what was sought to be conveyed by Mr. Montagu when he suggested a permanent remedy for the avoidance of such mishaps as the hurried and ill-equipped expedition to Baghdad. The incident shews the angle of vision of each of the two Secretaries. That Mr. Lloyd George should have called Mr. Montagu to office in succession to Mr. Chamberlain, so soon after what had fallen from each in Parliament, seems an undoubted proof of a reversal of the policy that has till now found favour with the present Government of India. If Lord Chelmsford cannot bring himself to consent to such a reversal, the way would be clear for a Viceroy who would work in concert with Mr. Montagu at a particularly critical period in the history of the Empire.—(*Hindu*, 21st July.)

V.—Their Ultimatum

[This was too much for the Anglo-Indian Press. The "Madras Mail," fearing Mr. Montagu's interference, issued an ultimatum to him and "promised "an outburst of protest which may result in a change of personnel at the India Office in quick succession to any change here."]

IN the briefest leader we have for a long time past seen in the "Madras Mail" an ultimatum on behalf of "European opinion" is published in its yesterday's issue which would doubtless be widely reproduced in the Indian Press. Perhaps, it is written so briefly and authoritatively as becoming a proper ultimatum in order that Renter's Agency in Madras may cable it to England and the "Mail" evidently hopes that Mr. Montagu when he reads it will hold his breath in suspense and feel his extremities cold. If Mr. Montagu will be diverted from his plan of action by the prospect of his having to lay down his office, he must evidently consent to run his race with the millstone of the "European opinion" as set forth by the "Madras Mail" round his neck. He should have preferred honorable obscurity to office under such conditions and we may leave Mr. Montagu to take care of himself in the face of the formidable chastisement held out to him. Mr. Montagu must have come across far harder barriers than the threat of an Anglo-Indian paper and if he has not at any time allowed himself to be cowed down by such an "imperial bounder" as Lord Curzon, he is surely not going to be thwarted in his purposes by a cablegram from Madras conveying the dire consequence to

himself fore-shadowed by the "Madras Mail." He will simply smile and light another cigarette and enjoy it all the more keenly for the "Mail's" undertaking to pay Mr. Montagu in the same coin.

But we in India should shew ourselves alive to the significance of this ultimatum. We must read it aright and make no mistake as to what it refers to. It has nothing to do with the Reform Scheme, but it is wholly concerned with the rumoured liberation of Mrs. Besant and her associates from internment. It has been the common talk of the town for over a week now that Mr. Montagu suggested the release as a preliminary to his arrival in India and that Lord Pentland offered to resign if he should be expected to comply with the suggestion. The talk suddenly ceased and now the 'Mail' leader shows that the most critical moment has arrived. It is quite on the cards that Mr. Montagu might have felt compelled to indicate that he had no option but to reluctantly accept Lord Pentland's resignation. But it cannot be his resignation only; for the 'Mail' talks of "men" on the spot; it writes of "choosing between Mr. Montagu and men on the spot;" it seems likely therefore that with Lord Pentland the members of his Council everyone of whom is equally responsible for the present situation have signified their intention to resign with their Chief. If so, that is what should be expected of a body of loyal colleagues. The present Government of Madras, with its love of arbitrary procedure and its faith in artficially created sectional support, has been long enough in power

and has gathered the bitter ashes of its policy in the alienation it has brought about between the educated community and itself as evidenced by numerous public proofs. It is time that it retires and gives place to another policy to be carried out by another Government. When the internment is cancelled, it will certainly enhance the prestige of Mr. Montagu but it must equally lower the prestige of the Governor-in-Council of Madras. It would be unfair if the Governor alone is to resent it and lay down his office, seeing that in so important a matter every member of his Council should have been a party to it. And, if rumour is to be believed the Governor has been the best of the lot and when he resigns as a protest, public opinion is not likely to view with esteem the action of the Councillors who choose to stand behind. We believe they are all more or less entitled to retire or at any rate go on long furlough preparatory to retirement. There is nothing so healthy for a new feeling of co-operation to set in as the replacement of a Government that has steadily led to an impossible situation by its acts of omission and commission. "European opinion" whatever it may include will not be on the brink of a catastrophe, simply because four people who are well entitled to rest after an arduous attempt at good government are succeeded by four others. There is absolutely no racial feeling now between Europeans and Indians as such, seeing that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Arundale are as much "European" as Lord Pentland and Mr. Gillman and Sir Alexander Cardew,

and that Mr. Wadia is as much Indian as the Indian member of Council. The present situation is absolutely free from racial animosity of any kind and it is wholly due to the political blunder of a subordinate Government. Its giving place to another President and Council will be no more than what would take place where every subordinate entity is responsible to a superior.

As regards Mr. Montagu's resignation following in quick succession that of the Madras Government, we cannot very well see how the 'Mail' promises to bring it about. Of course there are champions like Sir J. D. Rees who will jump to their feet to heckle the Secretary of State. But that does not mean that they command a majority on the floor of the House or that every member of the House will be shocked to hear that Mr. Montagu does not choose to surrender his responsibility into the hands of a provincial bureaucracy. What else does "European opinion" in Madras propose to do? Will all the European business-men and the Civil Service rise to a man and quit South India, if Mr. Montagu continues in office? In that case Mr. Montagu may consider that he has done work enough for a decade and that it is but fair that some one else should step into his place. But until then he knows where to stay and neither the Cabinet nor the House will consider that a cataclysm has set in with the reversal of the present policy and the retirement of the man responsible for it.—(*Hindu*, 30th Aug.)

VI.—"Bulk of the Population"

[To strengthen this ultimatum, cablegrams were arranged to be sent to the authorities in England, among them from "Conservative Indians" also. Rao Bahadur P. Theagaraya Chettiyar, as President of the South Indian People's Association, sent one to the Premier stating that "the bulk of the population were neither Home Rulers nor followers of Mrs. Besant"—at the very moment when Mrs. Besant's release was under consideration.]

IN his counter-cablegram to the Secretary of State for India, Rao Bahadur P. Theagaraya Chetty has thought it worth while to inform that functionary that the bulk of the population in South India "are neither Home Rulers nor followers of Mrs. Besant." Obviously, he hopes thereby to prevent the righting of a great wrong done to subjects of the Crown, as loyal as himself, and against whom nothing but executive displeasure can be alleged. The logic and philosophy of his position in seeking to render this public service are of such a phenomenally clear-headed character that it is difficult to resist the temptation of trying to benefit by his commendable performance. We may leave it to non-Brahmana Hindus to say how far Mr. Theagaraya Chetty represents their opinion in the cablegram he has sent; and possibly he does represent a micro-microscopic section of non-Brahmanas; we do not question it, and take it for granted. But the honesty of bringing in "the bulk of the population" in this connection is too questionable to be passed over in indulgent silence. It is a truism of which

no British politician need be informed that the bulk of the population are neither Home Rulers nor followers of Mrs. Besant, nor for that the followers of any man in official authority or unofficial leadership. They are what they have been for centuries—"the bulk of the population." We who know a few things more about them cannot see the extraordinary intellectual feat of averring a fact as patent as that trees in India do not walk, but merely grow and decay where they grow and decay. Is that a political argument? and is that a justification for internment of any political leader or follower? The bulk of the population have hardly one full meal a day and struggle from day dawn to day end as though life is one unending turmoil, as though existence is one long drawn out privation and misery from cradle to grave. Their one fear is an ever present possibility of sudden destitution without any means of staving it off. Born in want and woe, they grow in ignorance and apathy, live in ignorance, want and fear of want, suffer in silence, and die in misery with a load of horror as to what may become of those whom they leave behind as their nearest kith and kin. Of politics, they only know how hard it is to have access to the fire-wood of the forest, the salt of the sea, the refreshing and strengthening juicy yield of the palms with which Nature has blessed their land of birth. Gnawing hunger is their one reality and destitution the moment the feet of the "bread" winner get cold their one certainty. What do they know of Home Rule, of Mrs. Besant, or of

one more famous than Mrs. Besant, of Theagaraya Chettiar himself? What do they know of British Rule except through the emblems of authority as represented by the detective force of the Police, the Abkari, Excise and Forest Departments? It is an act of political sacrilege to flaunt in the face of authority the supposed opinion of the bulk of the population, unmindful of the sanctity that attaches to grovelling poverty, abysmal ignorance, perpetual hunger and irredeemable bondage to dirt and disease. Let us not, to all our other infamies, add the infamy of making the bulk of the population a factor in our party politics. Let us not to all our other hypocrisies add the hypocrisy of using them as a clientele to our political wares—if one can do nothing to their relief. Hypocrisy is a strong word, but what other word can we use when we find that Mr. Theagaraya Chettiar can "ask for 'Fiscal Autonomy" without a thought as to the bulk of the population wanting it or not, knowing it or not, but his being staggered by the opinion of the bulk of the population as to Home Rule or the release of Mrs. Besant and her associates? If he knows that Fiscal Autonomy necessarily means Home Rule, in some shape or other, that it is the essence of Home Rule, that in fact Home Rule is a machinery and Fiscal Autonomy its product, if he knows this much and if he can take upon himself to make a demand for the product, is it an inexpiable sin to ask for the machinery that brings it into existence, as a tangible, exercisable right? And if in asking for the essence, the bulk

of the population is conveniently forgotten, what should it be but a right move when the demand is made for the kernel that contains the essence? Is it or is it not hypocrisy, if it is not to be excused on the ground of density of understanding?

A grosser wrong is, however, the purpose for which he has taken the name of the poor in vain. It will not matter in the least if he should "support the policy and authority of the Government" and "unqualifiedly repudiate" the sentiments contained in Sir Subramanya Iyer's cable as his own individual opinion; but in requiring the back of the bulk of the population for such a purpose, he is putting it for a very vile use indeed. Do the bulk of the population want that all those who are Home Rulers should be kept in confinement and that those who are so confined should not be released to the doomsday? For himself he may ask for all Courts of Justice to be abolished to-morrow, he may urge the abrogation of the Penal, and Procedure Codes, and of the Law of Evidence. He may say in effect, "we are here to be governed, govern as you please"—forgetting that in a moment of temporary aberration he asked for "Fiscal Autonomy" once upon a time and that "once upon" not very long ago. But how can he, on behalf of the bulk of the population, make the grotesque demand that men and women may be confined without trial, that anybody however gifted or deficient, may be reduced to the condition of "vegetable" existence—of growing and decaying without work —without work, sacred to one's own heart?

Let him have a miniature assembly of the bulk of the population and put it to them whether without any inquiry a person may be asked to leave a place and give up his work that brings him his wage and his mental and moral satisfaction, let him put this and if he gets half-a-dozen of this sample of the bulk to side with him, then it will be time for him to presume upon the knowledge of the bulk. For arbitrarily depriving liberty, to appeal to the 'people' of the children of the soil, for support is to appeal to them to blind their eyes with their own hands. Still, such is party fervour and party audacity that Mr. Chettiar does not find anything uncommon in his cablegram which he sent in the name of the South Indian Peoples' Association. Did he convene a formal meeting and get its vote before he took such an egregious step? As regards Congress Committees and Home Rule League bodies, no such vote is necessary in the face of numberless resolutions passed by these bodies. Is there one such Resolution about the internment that the South Indian Peoples' Association has passed? If not how can he presume to send such a cable? Again is the South Indian Peoples' Association a representative body of the bulk of the population? Is it uot a limited liability concern, bound to publish balance sheets of profit and loss, and as such can the political opinions of such a body be presumed without a formal discussion and vote? I do not mean to say that a registered company cannot have political views. But its views must be arrived at as formal Resolutions of formal meetings and it

cannot be run as the private organization of one of its office bearers. If Mr. Chettiar has cabled after a vote of the Association, let us have the proceedings of the meeting so that as a part of the bulk of the population we may know what really took place at that meeting. If not, it is plain that the Association is also used as though it were the voiceless bulk.

The time is gone by when British politicians can be hoodwinked even by those who can make up their minds to speak on behalf of the bulk of the population in India. But, even if there were a possibility of success in that direction, we who are of the same country as the Secretary of the South Indian Peoples' Association, we know that it ought not to lie with him to barter away our primary rights of personal liberty, and of freedom of legitimate criticism and political work, in our name, or in the name of any section of the population, without a definite mandate therefor from that section. Home Rule and Fiscal Autonomy are controvertible demands, a certain latitude of representative expression is legitimate and permissible in such controversies. But as regards our right to breathe what air we choose, there can be no controversy—unless when a man or a woman is to be deprived of that liberty by a Court of Justice—the emblem not of earthly power but of the reflection of God's shadow upon earth. Not until by a Judicial tribunal is one's freedom deprived, should it be open to Government to interfere with a British subject's freedom. However, they take the consequence of their action when a Government so interfere. But,

how on earth, can a man who calls himself the Secretary of a Peoples' Association, how on earth can he ask that people should be kept in incarceration without trial, although as recently shewn, a man may be driven to commit suicide in internment? Whoever asks whether that martyr to freedom was a Brahman or non-Brahman? He was a British subject and he hanged himself, but he only lent his hands for the harrowing deed. Whose heart was it that led him to it? Will the Secretary of the Peoples' Association tell us whose heart it was and whether the heart of his Association is in his deed, whether his cablegram is a Papal Writ of Absolution for the self-slaughter that he had to go through? If it were so, a Peoples' Association cannot but be a cloak, but too good a cloak for so base an office! The order of internment may not reach several of us; not even if a Nero should become the ruler of a country can it reach many. But it may reach any one of us at any moment. Plague and Cholera do not attack every body in a town however infected; but sanitary precautions are taken. A cobra can bite but one person at a time, but every one of us believes that that one person may be any one of us. Repression need not reach and scotch all those who are now carrying on their business as usual. But there is no safety in such a condition. And it is the perpetuation of such a state that the Secretary of a Peoples' Association, speaking on behalf of the bulk of the population, has asked for. Poor bulk, we know where they are. But the Peoples' Association—is that body going to make a rope for

more persons in internment to hang themselves with, or for others to commit a moral and intellectual asphyxia? Whether any answer is to be vouchsafed or not, the question cannot but be put.—(*Hindu*, 11th Sept.)

VII—The Policy without a Godfather

[At a meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council on 5th September, as a result of the correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Government of India, an announcement was made intimating the early cancellation of the orders of internment.]

ON the principle that all's well that ends well, we are prepared to welcome the change in the repressive policy that has been in the ascendant for some months now. It is an interesting and a singularly instructive episode that has now come to an end, and if one cares to set down its chronology, it is not for marring the felicitations due to the Government of India but for knowing how we have to adapt ourselves to the ways of an Earthly Providence. What part the Surrender of Kut has played in this drama will not be known outside a select few. I mean by the surrender of Kut the failure in Mesopotamia which led to the appointment of the Mesopotamian Commission and which again led to the instalment of Mr. Montagu in the India Office.

We shall begin with the admission of the Government of India that they did issue a Circular about the Home Rule movement. They are not prepared with

equal candour to place before the people the terms of that Circular. According to the law of evidence as enacted by the Government of India itself, when a document is not produced, the inference is that, if produced, it would prejudice the party withholding it. But we shall willingly forbear from drawing such a narrow inference. The Circular was all for public good, and the Government of India's refusal to publish it is also for public good. I admit this might be their *bona fide* belief, although other people may think otherwise. We assume, however, that this Circular was not intended to be read and forgotten by the Local Governments. Sir William Vincent himself stated that it was for "asking them to take any action or adopt particular attitude towards the movement for Self-Government within the Empire or Home Rule." I have put Sir William Vincent's words within quotation marks, lest there be any misapprehension. The Circular was issued in March or about that time, and every incident of any importance in connection with the repressive policy of the Local Governments has been subsequent to March. And looking to the successive steps taken by the Local Governments, can the inference be resisted that all these actions of Local Governments were the outcome of that Circular? The Government of India say in so many words: "It was true that a Circular was issued by the Government of India to Local Governments and administrations in last March or about that time, to take any action or adopt particular attitude towards the movement for Self-Government within the Empire

or Home Rule"—and we know too well "the action" and "the attitude" of the Local Government since March or about that time. Under these circumstances was it necessary for Sir William Vincent to add that the Government were not prepared to lay the Circular on the table? It has been lying on "the table" from about that time until almost yesterday—in the action and the attitude of the Local Governments towards Self-Government within the Empire or Home Rule! So far as we in Madras are concerned we know that about March, the new daily in Madras, *Justice*, was started and that questions under an erroneous impression were put in the Council as to whether the Government gave any material assistance to that paper. Such a journal from its very inception went on accusing the Government of "dropping the stick when they saw the cobra," the cobra meaning, of course, Mrs. Besant. Accusation is the best form of encouragement, is the best way of goading to action, and *Justice* picked up the stick for the Government and wanted "action." Meanwhile when May came, Lord Pentland also found the need, without any previous provocation whatever, to go into the question of Self-Government within the Empire; and adjuring us to put out of thought all such ambitions, he asked for public support in some drastic action he might have to take. The connection between the Circular and the warning speech must strike many as cause and result—while the accusation of dropping the stick cannot be forgotten when the stick came to be applied soon after

the warning. In Bombay, Bengal and the Central Provinces there were equally entertaining indications of the outcome of the Circular, so far as we can judge by chronology. But let me confine myself to Madras. After the internment and the externment, the Madras Government was getting resolute and unfailing backing up from *Justice*—as evidence of "Indian" opinion. They were satisfied with this, and they might have continued to be satisfied with this and the Zemindari Manifesto. The Secretary of the South Indian People's Association, which publishes *Justice*, so late as September 1st, cabled to the Secretary of State upholding the action of the Madras Government as regards Mrs. Besant. So, the Madras Government have got still that support with which they began. They had it in advance, even before they ordered the internment and they have it now when their action is threatened to be upset according to the *Mail*. The Circular of the Government of India has not been withdrawn to the knowledge of the public. Mr. Montagu has not at all interfered. The Circular was issued about March; the local wheels began to move and reached one stage in May and another in June; and now in September the wheels are required to go back—the personnel of the Government of India remaining the same and the opinion of *Justice* and the *Mail* and the Zemindars remaining the same. The only question is whether they have ascertained that Mrs. Besant has changed her opinions or is now willing to give any assurance which she refused to give in June. If this

last supposition has only to be made to be dismissed, then we come back to the perplexing question why the Government of India should recommend now the cancellation of an order that seems so plainly an outcome of their own Circular? Is this the way the policy of a Local Government in an important matter is to be controlled by the Government of India? What is the share of responsibility of the Madras Government in the policy they pursued? If it is only that of acting on the lines of, or in consonance with, the Circular of the Government of India, why should the *Madras Mail* in so dictatorial a manner as to convey that it has the support of men on the spot spoken of their impending resignation? On the other hand, if the responsibility was the Madras Government's only, where was the Government of India when Lord Pentland delivered his speech and issued the order of internment subsequently? And more than all, what becomes of the Circular in that case? If it was a matter of co-operation between the Provincial and the Supreme Governments—then what has occurred now to cause a divergence between the views of the two bodies? Failing all these and putting Mr. Montagu out of consideration, since there is no way of accounting for the change, it is conclusive that the episode is without a recognisable godfather. If the Anglo-Indian Press will study the ways of the Government and offer discriminating criticism, it will do more good to the cause of the Bureaucracy than it can do by a policy of blind and unthinking cavil or support. Now at least

it can see how confounded are some of its ways and with what little benefit to any party concerned. The Circular of the Government of India fights shy of public light, but chronology establishes its character beyond rational doubt; non-Brahmana split has come and almost closed—like a pebble that divides particles of the same water; and the pebble has gone to the bottom. The internment has done more work for Home Rule than Mrs. Besant's tireless endeavours; and, after all, the repressive policy that it implied is to be reversed, and in its place has been installed an irrevocable enunciation of the goal of progress. We all of us here are the same as ever before, the *dramatis personæ* of this plot of the season—the trivial change on account of the Mesopotamian failure is neither here nor there—and we owe both the initiation and reversal of this policy alike to men on the spot!—(*Commonweal*, 5th October. The Circular and what followed.)

VIII—Political Complacency.

[The policy that has been traced to the end has a fallacy at its background, It is that the Bureaucracy knows all that is necessary and that it is doing all that is necessary for India's good to which Lord Pentland gave expression in his speech on 24th May.]

IN his speech at Ootacamund which has now become memorable, Lord Pentland has perpetrated a political witticism of which it is hard to believe he was not fully conscious. His Excellency has been here for five years now, and if he had utilised his opportunities to study the machinery of the Government over which he was presiding he would not have reconciled himself to a statement which makes any knowing man laugh in dismay. Speaking of Self-Government for India as an ideal to be slowly and gradually realised, he said : " Consciously or unconsciously, all of us who have the honour of taking any part in the government of any portion of India are working for and accelerating the approach towards that ideal, however distant it may be." In the history of political progress the complacency of those in power has been the one feature as amusing as it is painful to contemplate. There never has been as yet a political revolution in which official complacency, up till the last moment, has not had a notable share in bringing it about. The latest example is that of the Russian Revolution. The wife of the ex-Tsar is reported to have said but a month before the Revolution, speaking to a friend of hers who ventured to warn her of the approaching

danger : " We have been here for twenty years and we know the people love us." Did not in England King Charles believe that if he went to the House of Commons and obtain possession of the ringleaders, " the birds " as he called them, he might rule the country without opposition as he pleased ? His complacency took the form of a belief that discontent against his rule was the result of the opposition roused by an arrogant and disloyal few. The complacency of the Tsar was of a slightly different kind. He believed that he was doing for Russia everything that could be expected of a progressive monarch. In France the representatives of the *ancien régime* devoutly believed that the people were only fit to be ruled as they were. What, again, is the American War of Independence but a history of political complacency pitted against a political reality—of whose existence those in power did not wish even to be properly informed ? Well, Lord Pentland is not a youngster not to know the significance of these great historical verities. He may believe that the Government in India is all that it should be for the present, but when he believes this in the face of overwhelming testimony to the contrary, his belief is no more than complacency. Ruling Chiefs, like the Maharaja of Alwar and the Maharaja of Bikanir, ex-Dewans and Judges like Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao and Sir Subrahmaniem, representatives of the middle and lower middle classes all over the country have in unmistakable terms warned responsible authorities here and elsewhere that the character of the Govern-

ment in India must undergo a radical change, and that there should inevitably be a transfer of power from a few officials to the representatives of the people.

In the face of these indications, Lord Pentland feels so supremely satisfied with what the officials are doing for the country to equip it for Self-Government at a future date, that he wants to arrest by repressive action popular attempts to hasten the day of that reform. But what grounds has he to advance in support of his assumption that the Government is doing precisely what the people want—the only difference being in the rate of progress? We shall take the system of the exodus—the system which deposits the Government of the Province on a hill-top for over half the time of the year, even during such phenomenal times as these. What have the officials, including Lord Pentland, done to terminate an administrative scandal of this kind? When can it be done away with so long as we depend upon officials to do away with it? We shall take again the grant of compensation allowance for lack of promotion to the members of the Civil Service. How can we hope for the eradication of such extravagant indulgences, unless the Civil Service is brought under the more wholesome control of a Legislature that will govern in the people's interests? We shall take, again, military reforms in India. Whatever British statesmen may have said in appreciation of Indian valour in England, how did the authorities here constitute the new Defence Force, at a time

when old distinctions ought to have been cheerfully thrown into the melting pot? It is a temporary Force for the duration of the War, and in constituting it, why should they have preserved the colour bar between the Indian and European sections of the Force? Further, at a time when the right of volunteering could have been with the happiest of results thrown open to educated Indians, why should it have been abolished altogether? What, again, of the Public Services Commission's Report—which has become obsolete in most respects, and which has nevertheless been issued as a forecast of what India may expect after the War in administrative matters. Even coming down to so trivial a matter as the grant of one more Collectorship to Indians, where is the grace, not to speak of justice, of equalising the number of openings by appointing a civilian to a place held all along most creditably by successive Indians? Look, too, at the facile way in which Executive Council memberships have been made to subserve the policy of official absorption; look at the way in which Judges and Council members have been allowed to change places, sapping thereby individual independence and restricting the chances of non-officials, promoting stagnation instead of keeping up a free inflow of a fresh non-official element into official channels. Look at the licence permitted to some of the journals which favour the policy of the Government, and which most unblushingly stoop to fomenting class hatred, persisting in a campaign of calumny against entire communities.

Notwithstanding all these facts, Lord Pentland is complacent enough to take credit for what the Government is doing, and is indignant that the people should be discontented so far as to make their own demands. We know what we can get with the help of the Bureaucracy. It can to-morrow transform the face of the country as though a magician's wand had done it. Cannot the officialdom in a British Province do more than what an unselfish and patriotic Dewan like that of Mysore can do for the people of that State? But the Bureaucracy is not going to do it, simply will not do it. We have therefore to appeal over its head to the British Nation and our Sovereign, the King-Emperor. Lord Pentland wants us to desist from this appeal, because he, in his political complacency, feels that the Government are doing all that is necessary and that we are hugging agitation for the sake of agitation. No. On the other hand, His Excellency has failed to understand even the rudiments of Indian politics, judging from his speech; and in any case in about ten weeks' time his interest in India will become a faint and feeble memory, but for the spell of magic grandeur that surrounded him in the East. What reforms India may get after the War will become a matter of indifference to him, as it has become to thousands who have enjoyed power and prestige, and become rich in bank balances and badges and decorations. Political complacency is anxious to perpetuate such a condition of things, and he has discharged the duty he owes to the class to which he belongs. But the

people of India have to depend upon themselves for their present and future, and cannot afford to be equally complacent. (*Commonweal*, 15th June.)

IX—" We have come to stay "

[Another fallacy that prompts a re-actionary policy in India is the belief that in asking for effective control over the Executive, the progressive party desire the withdrawal of British official and unofficial agencies from the country. Mr. Beatson Bell, senior member of the Bengal Executive Council, in giving expression to this belief gave it a standing which it had lacked in recent years.]

ON the same day, by a mere accident, that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab was making the Supreme Legislative Council his forum for a general impeachment of the people of India outside the limits of the Punjab, the Senior Member of the Bengal Executive Council was harping upon another string a note that was at any rate pleasanter to hear. If it were no more than merely pleasanter, we need make no special mention of it. Its value however should not be misjudged, because it lacked the vehemence of the Lieutenant-Governor's dithyrambic composition. Mr. Beatson Bell, unlike Sir Michael, was quite within his rights, did not trespass upon anybody's time or patience or infringe the rules of the Agenda, and had the honourable candour to state in a direct way what lies at the core of the present situation. Notwithstanding all these agreeable aspects of his speech, we ought not, as I said, to misjudge its nature. It reveals

to us in a subtle way the resolve of the Civil Service to be what they have been in India and to keep India as it has been all along. He does not attempt to hide this crucial fact and he wants the people of India to take note of it. To a critic who joins issue with us on such lines, we are bound to be equally pleasant and candid, and if in result any agreement of aims can be arrived at the trust and candour on both sides would not have been in vain.

With Mr. Bell's proposition that the British have come to stay we have no quarrel, and nobody has proposed that they should be shipped back to England. Let them stay as long as they please and go back when they please, let them build churches and by their side chapels also, let them construct schools and seminaries, and more orphanages as well; let them raise factories and mills, and grow tea, coffee and rubber. Let them be eligible to man the public service and grow rich in commerce and trade. Which responsible man has said that any of these opportunities should be denied to them? The catholicity of Indians is such that even if Frenchmen should aspire to all these opportunities we should not deny them. As a matter of fact, against German sugar and dyes which have crippled and killed our resources, against French, Italian and Japanese silk, what protest have we raised such as the manly Canadian would have done? Have not Germans and Americans been employed in our Public Services? No man in India has asked for the repatriation of any of the races of the world—not simply under the

benign British Rule, but even under the immediate sovereignty of Shivaji and his successors or the distant suzerainty of Aurangazeb and his descendants. Nay, from the time that the Portuguese came to India, there has been no racial antipathy against Europe. Before Europe knew what it was to tolerate foreigners we had taught them here how to respect the immigrants of another continent. We gave them protection of person and property, we gave them sites and materials, not simply for their factories and settlements but for their churches and schools also. Rather had they not built churches we would have looked down upon them, had they no saviour of their own, we would have given them one of our own. To us unlikely as in the case of European races at no time in our history has the question of national, religious or racial assimilation seemed of the slightest importance. Rather, ours has been the ideal that each stock must progress in its own way and not be merged or lost in another stock. Not fusion, which in many cases spells confusion and destroys identity, but self-development and self-realization which preserves it and strives for perfection retaining that identity, has been our call as a race, and has been at the bottom of all our conscious efforts in the sphere of nation-building and racial co-ordination. To a people with such a history, Mr. Beatson Bell's refrain "we have come to stay" causes only a smile and a good humoured nod of the head. Was he then in a vacuous state of mind when he repeatedly swore as it were "we have come to stay"? Were India a

country of comic opera songs, the rhythmic protestation of Mr. Beatson Bell will become the favourite frenzy of theatre-goers, and will be spontaneously echoed to the roof. Were one inclined to parody him one cannot find a more suitable refrain than he has hit upon. But at a time of serious pre-occupations like this, it behoves us not to betray any propensity towards the comic side of things, however tempting, and to confine ourselves to an examination of the issues that have prompted so amusing a statement from so sedate a quarter.

Mr. Beatson Bell's verdict on the schemes of political reconstruction that are now discussed is that "they all seem to be or nearly all of them false and out of drawing, because they ignored the simple fact that the British have come to stay." Really, have we ignored the fact?—rather, is it not because of our realising it too well that we have had to propound schemes of reconstruction? Indian politics will become much simpler if we failed to recognise that the British have come to stay, although it might thereby become romantic and perhaps fruitless also. We recognised this fact, I mean by we our ancestors, recognised this fact much more clearly and deliberately than Mr. Beatson Bell's forebears. That is the reason why their descendants are staying here now. What then of these schemes of reconstruction asks Mr. Beatson Bell. They are all meant to enable them to stay, not as they have stayed till now, but as the changed conditions would permit. Let Mr. Bell brush up his Indian History. Any school book

will do. I shall ask him a couple of questions to obtain his assent to my statement. My first demand is to know if Mr. Beatson Bell is staying now as the generation of Anglo-Indians of Sir Charles Elliott's time stayed? If they do so now, Mr. Beatson Bell instead of being the Senior Member of the Bengal Executive Council would be the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. What a change if not a fall from such a status to the present position! There is no chance again, as long as British Rule continues in India, of a member of the Civil Service wielding the sceptre of the historic Jaghir of Clive. If we go back again upon a longer stretch of time to gain a clearer perspective and visualise the scheme of things as they stood when Warren Hastings was Governor-General of Bengal, were the British in India staying at the close of Lord William Bentinck's tenure as Governor-General of India as they did at the time when Hastings and Francis were trying to keep each other at bay? The Nandkumar of contemporary history with Hastings gives place to Raja Ram Mohun Roy of Bentinck's period. The Regulating Act gets behind the Charter Act of 1833. Not profit by monopoly but the abolition of monopoly was the topic of State policy. The British had stayed from the time of the Surat Factory and through the intervening period when the Founder of British India had to face the threat of passive resistance of the Company's servants when he had to do away with their system of private monopoly. What the Civil Service threatened to do an hour before

according to the "Madras Mail" their predecessors threatened to do at the very time when a born ruler among men realising his responsibilities to the land of his adoption tried to do justice between its natives and the natives of his own country when British territory was no more than a visible patch on the Map of India. That episode of Clive and the mutinous servants of the Company will have to be remembered whenever we hear of those who bear the whiteman's burden casting it off. From Bentinck's time to the period of Ripon's Viceroyalty, the British stayed in India—but found that the country had changed as the result of Bentinck's policy of western education in an eastern country and of the boon of a free press that he had conferred on the country. A consciousness of Political Identity under British Rule had definitely come into existence during Lytton's time which Macaulay and Bentinck anticipated as surely as a chemist does a precipitate. The British stayed throughout this period. From the period of Lord Dufferin to the days of Lord Curzon the British have continued their stay. But Lord Dufferin's Legislative Council was not Lord Curzon's. Nay, even Lord Elgin's was not. Pherozeshah Mehta facing Lord Elgin and his Law and Home Members said that they were mistaken in looking for perpetual hallelujahs from the critics of Government. It was a gong the sound of which they had not heard in this country. It was ominous, but they kept discreetly silent and knew that their successors would have to stay under different conditions. Lord Cur-

zon who came as Lord Elgin's successor had to know that India was not a country of plastic princes and bowed down coolies, but, that between these two sections there was a vast multitude of immense capacity, cohesion and initiative. The Anglo-Indian Press had to own that a brilliant youngster, the chela and protagonist of the sagacious Ranade had beaten the Government of Lord Curzon hollow as a critic of its finances. The British who had come to stay were staying throughout. The conditions had once again to change. Since the Morley scheme took effect have they been staying as they did under Lord Curzon? What resolution had he to accept or reject, whereas Lord Chelmsford by a day's absence from his Council has to feel behind the times now. If the present Viceroy who is now staying in India stays under conditions different to those under which Lord Curzon stayed, why should not Mr. Beatson Bell's successors stay under still more different conditions? Perhaps Mr. Beatson Bell's son may be a member of the Supreme Executive Council with an Indian as Governor-General and President. Those who come to stay are welcome to stay, but they cannot expect the present conditions to stay also : these must change as conditions have changed from the time of Hastings and Impey up till now.

The whole question is, because the British have come to stay, is the country to be at standstill? If not, why put forth as a formidable obstacle the fact that nobody disputes that the British will have to stay here? If you mean thereby that the conditions

must be changed so as to make it worth while for the British to stay, you imply that India must be governed to the benefit of British sojourners and not in the interests of its native millions, a statement against which British sovereigns and statesmen have solemnly pledged their faith. The most vital fact that Mr. Beatson Bell ignores is that from the very beginnings of British settlements in India, it is not only a section of the British people that came to India at successive periods, but that along with them certain principles of Government also came with them and that these have come to stay as well. Whether the descendants of those who implanted these principles stay or go, they have taken root in the soil and not until British connection ceases can they be uprooted. If the British in India should try to imperil them, the British at Home will not permit so dangerous a sacrilege knowing, that there is a moral as well as physical basis of their Empire in India. So far as their stay will be compatible with British principles of political progress, there is no question of their having to turn their backs upon India; but the moment they feel justified in pitting their stay against the irrepressible law of progress, that moment spells the hour of caution for unsullied British statesmanship. Time after time such a moment has come and gone, establishing beyond doubt that India is in the keeping of a much superior stock to those who have come to stay here. So long as that parent stock will not and does not fail us, there is nothing but amity behind all squabbles,

incriminations and recriminations; there is nothing but solidarity below an agitated surface. But how much more will not that solidarity and amity be, if only those who have come to stay will be actuated by the mission of governing India for its own good, and not simly for the profits of tea and jute, or the pay, the allowances and the annuity? (*Hindu*, 27th Sept.)

APPENDIX.

Sir Alexander Cardew's Syllogism

[Presiding at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sourastra High School at Madura, Sir A. G. Cardew called the Sourastras "a great non-Brahmana community." Sourastra public bodies repudiated th designation and called upon him to withdraw the appellation. In doing so, he perpetrated a Syllogism which discloses the trend of the official mind in the evolution of inter-communal harmony in India.]

"As you are Brahmanas, you must of course, possess all the Brahmanas' intelligence, perseverance, etc., and you will, therefore, doubtless not require any assistance from me or anyone else."—Sir A. G. Cardew, I.C.S.

Sir Alexander Cardew's reply to the resolution passed at a meeting of the Sourastra community compels attention to a question of State policy which can be at no time an inviting subject but which at present one should positively like to avoid. However, as events occur whether or not one may find them to his liking, we cannot help commenting on them as they come into public view. No member of the public is responsible for the Sourastra *contretemps* and Sir A. G. Cardew has by his letter raised important issues which he may have to leave unsolved as the time comes for him to lay down his office. Meanwhile what he has written is certain to produce

controversy and discontent as he has disposed of a grave question in an utterly cavalier spirit. What was the need for a Member of Council to enter into a question of caste status in opening an educational institution for the benefit of a particular community? All that was necessary for him to do was to go into the progress made by it in literary, in school and University education, as shewn in public reports and promise whatever support he could reasonably hold out to secure its advancement. But this would have been insipid from the point of view of one who probably wanted to furnish a stimulus to the Sourastra community. Such a course would not have served an official policy, official purpose, as the trend of public events has been illustrating of late. He wanted to make an annexation, not of course territorial, but communal; he wanted to enlarge the non-Brahmana Hindu community by a significant expression and he styled and stamped the Sourastras "a great non-Brahmana community." To have accepted such a designation even for the sake of favours to come from Sir Alexander Cardew would have been a grievous set-back to a class which has been strenuously maintaining its title to a Brahmana sect. If from a member of Government they accepted it, they could not complain if others followed suit. They passed resolutions repudiating the appellation and called on him to formally withdraw his statement; of course not because if Sir A. G. Cardew should say they were Brahmanas, everybody else would admit them to be so, but because his statement would militate

against their claim. The first question in this episode is why, should Sir Alexander Cardew have gone out of his way as a member of Government to concern himself with their caste status? If the matter as a caste question should happen to come up before him officially it is open to him to say what he thinks. But needlessly, and unsolicited, why should he have unbudrened himself as to Sourastras being Brahmanas or non-Brahmanas? It shews for one thing the preference Sir A. G. Cardew has, whatever preference Sourastras themselves may have. It comes to saying "it serves my policy and purpose to call you non-Brahmanas, and I am not concerned how you regard yourselves." Is it to the prestige of a Government for one of its members to leave such an impression, and where was the peremptory need for running such a risk?

What Sir A. G. Cardew has done in his reply is however worse than what he did in his speech. And it is the reply that raises other questions which have been allowed to rest somewhere in the background till now. If any statement in regard to a question of caste can be inconsiderate and provocative to non-Brahmanas, it is assuredly Sir Alexander's assumption that outside the Brahmana caste "intelligence, perseverance, etc.," are deficient, an assumption founded upon a total misapprehension of facts. The fallacy lies in regarding "intelligence, perseverance, etc.," as identical with success in scholastic life. On the other hand what a small part does a purely scholastic career play in the world of production, distribution

and capital and credit? Is it without "intelligence, perseverance, etc.," that Sourastras have become to-day a prosperous class of the community without the subordination which public service imposes? The textile trade of Madura, Salem, Conjeevaram, Kumbakonam and other places will show at a glance that there is absolutely no lack of intelligence or perseverance or etc. (whatever etc. may have been intended to mean) among Sourastras, but that these qualities are employed in directions other than passing the School Final or failing in the Intermediate or the B.A. examination. We shall take again the Vysiyas. Is it without intelligence and perseverance that they are, as a community, wealthier than Brahmanas? Again the Nattukottai Chetties, the great banking community of South India, are they what they are without intelligence, perseverance, etc. To-morrow let them come under the fatal fascination of a diploma and a degree, "as a community," they will become impoverished in health and incapable of earning what they earn now. Intelligence and perseverance are not the monopoly of or even possessed in a marked degree by the Brahmanas, only they are displayed in a walk of life where they are put to a test and receive an open hall-mark. Because these qualities are not so treated in other walks of life, it will be a grievous mistake to suppose that people engaged in them lack these qualities as a predominant communal characteristic.

And then, does Sir Alexander mean that unless a community possess the "Brahmana intelligence and

perseverance" they are not to be classed as Brahmanas? And conversely will every community that possesses these qualities become Brahmanas? Above all, what is the standard, what is the type of Brahmana intelligence? Is it "intelligence" that secures a diploma and enables a man to enter service on Re. 1 a day or is it intelligence that saves a man all that mental, physical and financial prostration, keeps him in sound body and mind and makes him earn much more than Re. 1 a day in some other walk of life? Most of those who are now known as Brahmanas have to fill schools and colleges not because the largest majority of them will be materially better off for doing so, but because, they have no other course to take to except to get from the house to the school, from the school to the college, and from the college to a public office, whatever they may get and whether what they get will be sufficient to maintain them or not. If a census be taken to-morrow in the city of Madras they will see how many of them are struggling without an economic return for all that they have spent upon education in the way of money and physical stamina. But still they go on with faith in School Final and B.A. for their children—simply because they cannot turn their hands to anything else. The fact that a Brahmana is Advocate-General and that three others are Judges of the High Court constitutes a great handicap for the Brahman community, since Brahman graduates are now coming to feel that they are not wanted in many public offices, and unpassed non-

Brahmanas are coming to be preferred to them. Because a Brahman is an Advocate-General, it does not mean that every Brahmana gets his economic return. On the other hand he is prejudiced in getting it. It is not of course the duty of the State to ensure an economic return; but is its duty to interfere with State organisations in such a way as to make economic returns more and more difficult? Is it their duty to take the bread out of one man and give it to another because of communal considerations? Should they not fix qualifications by positive on competitive standards and leave the matter to be decided automatically—if they do not mean to interfere with economic returns? Non-Brahmanas in the world of trade make huge incomes, and because they do not and cannot make them in the public service, it does not lead to any comment. But if a small number of high appointments are held by Brahmanas, it leads to comment, and they forget that the latter is as legitimate as the former. *But the worst result is that it is allowed to operate as a handicap on Brahmanas as a class—inasmuch as it leads to elimination on account of birth in the lower range of State appointments.* I would not have ventured to make these observations at a time of communal difference like the present, but for the exaggerated value attached to Brahmana intelligence, perseverance etc., and the utterly unfair consequence and practical hardship to which this exaggerated estimate leads.

From the Sourastra point of view the conclusion to which Sir Alexander has hurriedly come bristles

with more objections than from the Brahmana point of view. In effect he says, "since you are Brahmanas you do not stand in need of my help." That is of course a measure of the attachment he has for the Brahmana community. But that is by itself. The more relevant point is how do they forfeit their claims for encouragement, because they regard themselves as Brahmanas and will not allow even one so great as Sir Alexander to dub them "non-Brahamanas." We know that a standing order does not become rational, simply because it is elevated to the distinction of a G. O. Sourashtras are Sourashtras whether you call them Brahmanas or non-Brahmanas, and they deserve concessions *for what they are and not for what they are called.* How does it lie with a member of Government to turn away from them in a put out mood, pocketing his concessions, with an angry wave of the hand swearing practically that since they have chosen to call themselves by another name, he need not concern himself with their requirements? Unlike some people who are now trying to make all Brahmanas Panchamas, that great reformer, one of the greatest men India has produced, Swami Vivekananda said that he would convert Pariahs into Brahmanas. He did not live long enough to attempt it. But if to-morrow a pushful class of Panchamas should wear the thread of the Brahmanas, and change their habits of life and call themselves say Agastya Brahmanas, why should either the Government or any section of Hindus object to their doing so? As a matter of fact, all Hindus may well become Brahmanas

instead of becoming Panchamas. If caste among Hindus is to be abolished, let them all become members of the highest caste instead of the lowest. There is caste among Brahmanas themselves ; there is caste in one and the same Brahminical sect. They who talk of untouchables do not know that there are occasions when a Brahmana mother will not touch her child, when a Brahmana father will not receive a plate or a vessel out of the hands of his son, leave alone his touching him. There is no good for Sir Alexander Cardew or any number of Westerners far more intelligent and persevering than himself to venture into the ramifications of caste nomenclature and caste distinctions. He knows who Sourashtras are and what help may be given them to secure their educational advancement. Instead of doing what would be best for them, he had simply sought to make them a pawn in an official move and when they refuse to be so played, he tells them virtually that they might —take care of themselves. And all this for what ? For the name of Brahmanas they want to take.

After this, it is plain that the policy of Government in regard to educational concessions must be more rationally interpreted or undergo a revision. They must determine whether concessions are to be given to a class, because it is educationally backward, although financially well off and continue to be withheld it from a class financially backward although educationally far advanced, or given to a class both financially and educationally backward ? Except Panchamas and a few other "lower" classes most of the higher

Hindu castes and several sections of the Muhammadan community cannot be regarded as educationally *and* financially backward. In their case nobody need object to communial concessions. But in the case of most other classes, the principle of concession ought to be made individually applicable and not communally. A rich Muhammadan Mappilah or Lubbay boy and a poor Royapettah Mussalman need not get the same concession. So also among Hindus, whether they call themselves Brahmans or non-Brahmans. A boy must get exemption, because he is poor and not because other members of his class are poor; while at the same time if he is too poor to pay full fees, the fact that others of his caste are rich, ought not to bar his way to State aid. For a boy to get help as a member of a backward community, it must be backward both educationally and financially and such communities must be specifically enumerated, as for instance, potters, dhobies, barbers, etc., and not by a generic name of non-Brahmanas as though not to belong to the Brahman communities is a great claim for State consideration from the primary school to the High Court Bench. These questions would not have provoked discussion, but for Sir Alexander Cardew seeking to dig a well presumably with the best of intentions but coming upon a ghost in the process. (*Hindu*, 5th September, 1917.)

INDEX.

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